



INSIDE

Page 2

Forum; Space A travel for family

Page 3

STEP promotion; STOP LOSS

Pages 4

Civilian, military scientist, engineer bonus; Tribute to Women

Page 5

Cleaning high risk sites; Eubank gate fortified

Page 6, 7

Of Note

Page 7

New cemetery; Web-scam site; Greetings to deployed members

Page 8

Look ahead; 'Strides' cancer walk

Page 9

AF memorial; Contracting's Castillo dies; Lab's \$9 mil contract

Page 10

DE Awards

Page 11

ESGR ombudsman

Page 14-15

Best of Best; Gold Key

Pages 16-19, 22

Services

Page 23

Movies; Command TV

Page 24

Sports

Page 28

HAWC Talk

TODAY

High 70
Low 40



TOMORROW

High 71
Low 40



SUNDAY

High 65
Low 42



Force Protection Condition BRAVO
Straight Talk 853-4636



Photo by Damian Bohannon

Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hess, Air Force Chief of Safety, holds a press conference upon his return to Kirtland AFB March 7 from his duties with the Columbia Shuttle Investigation Board. Hess returned to his investigation board duties March 8.

Gen. Hess returns briefly from shuttle investigation

BY 2ND LT. KELLEY FINCHER

377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Where were you Feb. 1? When the Shuttle Columbia broke apart during reentry, Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hess was at the gym. By Feb. 2, he was in Louisiana, already investigating the accident.

At a press conference March 7, Hess spoke briefly about his role as a member of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

The board is currently monitoring all NASA maintenance and training procedures.

"You're going to have lots of different processes that need to be looked at," said Hess. "We don't envision these processes will necessarily be linked to the cause of the accident."

Hess is the Air Force Chief of Safety and commander of the Air Force Safety Center here. NASA chose Hess as a board member

because of his extensive experience with aircraft mishap investigations. Hess says the Columbia disaster requires an approach similar to aircraft mishap, but on a much larger scale because the debris is spread over multiple states.

The board is hopeful investigators will find more debris. So far researchers have tagged over 24,000 pieces of debris, but only 1,000 have actually been evaluated. Hess said a piece of debris large enough to be tracked by radar might provide additional evidence. Searchers are still trying to recover that piece in Nevada.

During his brief visit to Kirtland, Hess also visited the Starfire Optical Range to discuss what appears to be the final picture of the Columbia before it broke apart. Researchers are trying to refine the picture to investi-

gate an apparent bulge on the shuttle's wing.

Hess says the board has received mail from thousands of people with their take on the accident.

"This is really an American investigation. It's very pleasing to find a number of people from the scientific community to the general public at large, who are giving their time to help solve this problem."

The accident board is also trying to link together all of the donated home videos of the shuttle.

After the Challenger accident, NASA established an outside, independent board for future incidents. As the chief of safety for the Air Force, Hess knew he would be selected for the Columbia board.

The general returned to Louisiana March 8 to continue the investigation.

New base housing approved for Kirtland AFB

What do you get when military housing meets Parade of Homes?

Not possible, you say?

Well, welcome to a new master-planned community that features single family and town homes with the latest modern conveniences and a full range of amenities. Residents will enjoy a 4,781 square-foot community center with a swimming pool, recreation facility, tot lots, ball fields, gazebo, grills, picnic tables and walking paths.

The homes will have air conditioning, wiring for cable and high speed Internet, ceiling fans and garages with openers.

It's part of one of the largest housing privatization projects in Air Force history, demolishing 1,572 houses and building 868 new ones for a total of 1,079 units on the east side of Kirtland AFB.

The new community represents a successful new way of doing business for the Air Force. For members and their families, the developments offer an opportunity to live in the kind of neighborhood many people dream about.

A specific number of homes will be reserved for each eligible rank—airman 1st class to general. Almost 83 percent of the units are allocated to enlisted members and their families, including 73 percent for the junior enlisted. To ensure the homes are affordable, rents will be capped at the mirror housing allowances, including an allowance for utilities.

Improving quality of life for military families is a major goal of the Air Force's housing revitalization initiative.

Kirtland AFB is the sixth Air Force hous-

ing privatization project and a part of the DOD's Military Housing Privatization Initiative. However, this project is unique because it is the Air Force's first whole-base privatization, all the units on base are included in this project.

Making privatization work means working in close partnership with private developers. To make this project happen, Kirtland AFB officials are working with

NEW HOUSING

continued on Page 12

Housing privatization town hall meeting scheduled Monday

All base employees and residents interested in learning more about new housing to be built on Kirtland AFB are invited to attend a housing privatization town hall meeting, 6-8 p.m. Monday in the base theater.

The new developer will discuss plans for new homes, while base staff will be

available to answer questions from the audience. Six booths will also be available, for individual consultation related to housing issues.

Staff from Family Support, Housing, Finance, Legal, Transportation, and the developer will man these booths.